# **TARIFF ACTION MEMO**

**Date:** May 19, 2022

Date Filed: April 5, 2022

Statutory End Date: May 20, 2022

File No: TA525-8

Name of Utility: Chugach Electric Association, Inc. Subject: Revisions to Rules for Billing and Collections

## Recommendation

Staff recommends the Commission:

1. Approve Tariff Sheet Nos. 27, 31, 33, 34, and 40, filed April 5, 2022, by Chugach with TA525-8, as shown on the side-by-side tariff sheets attached as Appendix-1. The effective date of the tariff sheets should be May 20, 2022.

Please see attached Staff Memorandum supporting the above recommendations.							
Signed:K	<u>Keiba Kimp</u> Keiba Kimp	Title: <u>U</u>	Title: <u>Utility Tariff Analyst</u>				
Commission	decision regarding	this recommendat	ion:				
	Date (if different from May 19, 2022)	<u>l Concur</u>	<u>I Do Not</u> <u>Concur</u>	I Will Write a Dissenting Statement*			
Pickett		RMP					
Kurber							
Scott		AGS AGS					
Sullivan	<del></del>						
Wilson		<u>Juw</u>					

<sup>\*</sup> If this column is initialed, Staff will contact the Commissioner for the statement; otherwise, the dissent will simply be noted at the close of the By Direction letter or order.

## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Robert M. Pickett, Chairman

Keith Kurber II
Antony Scott
Daniel A. Sullivan
Janis W. Wilson

From: Keiba Kimp, Utility Tariff Analyst

Subject: Revisions to Rules for Billing and Collections

## Recommendation

Staff recommends the Commission:

1. Approve Tariff Sheet Nos. 27, 31, 33, 34, and 40 filed April 5, 2022, by Chugach with TA525-8, as shown on the side-by-side tariff sheets attached as Appendix-1. The effective date of the tariff sheets should be May 20, 2022.

# Filing

Chugach now submits TA525-8, proposing to update the Billing and Collection language in Rule 6 of its operating tariff. With TA525-8, Chugach submitted Tariff Sheet Nos. 27, 31, 33, 34, and 40 and requested the tariff sheets be effective May 20, 2022.

## **Notice**

The Commission issued a public notice for TA525-8 on April 6, 2022, with comments requested by May 6, 2022. No comments were received.

# **Analysis/Discussion**

## Billing and Collection Updates – Rule 6

With TA525-8, Chugach proposes to update the Billing and Collection language in Rule 6 of its operating tariff. Chugach states that the purpose of the filing is to improve clarity of to the billing and collection processes.

## Rule 6.1 Payment of Bills

On October 23, 2017, Chugach filed TA445-8, seeking to revise its Payment of Bills provision. With TA445-8, Chugach proposed to add a provision to Tariff Sheet No. 27 to allow retail members to make payments for service by credit card without being charged a third-party transaction fee. In addition, Chugach proposed that with the tariff change, the transaction fees associated with payment by credit cards would be included in its revenue requirement and recovered by all retail customers on the system. On December 19, 2017, the Commission approved Tariff Sheet No. 27, filed with TA445-8.

Date: May 19, 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See tariff advice letter for TA445-8, at page 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Letter Order No. L1700529, issued December 19, 2017.

With TA525-8, Chugach proposes to update Tariff Sheet No. 27 to state, "in person payments can be made at Chugach's service center as indicated in Section 5.12 of the operating tariff".<sup>3</sup> Section 5.12 identifies Chugach's contact information, including telephone number, email address, mailing address, payment remittance options, and physical address. In addition, the proposed revision removes the words, "at our office" and the address for the South Campus. Staff believes this is reasonable as Section 5.12 gives the complete contact information for Chugach.

# Rule 6.7 Level Pay Billing, Eligibility

On February 24, 2017, Chugach filed TA433-8, proposing to update its standard billing and contract forms to accommodate the changes approved in Order No. U-15-081(8), which stipulated that Chugach remove the State of Alaska gross revenue tax from its FY 2014 Test year revenue requirement.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, Chugach proposed editorial changes to other billing and contract forms on Tariff Sheet No. 7, including the discontinuance of the "Level Pay Enrollment" form and revising its Level Pay Plan eligibility requirements to reflect current enrollment procedures. On April 20, 2017, the Commission approved Tariff Sheet Nos. 7, Appendix A, a number of billing and contract forms and Tariff Sheet No. 31, filed in TA433-8.<sup>5</sup>

With TA525-8, Chugach proposes to update the contact information for Member Services in Tariff Sheet No. 31 to reference Section 5.12 of its tariff. The current tariff sheet only identifies Chugach's main telephone number and physical address, not all of the contact information that is listed in Section 5.12.

Staff notes that 3 AAC 52.405(b) provides that a utility list in its tariff all reasonably available means of contacting its business office or service centers and 3 AAC 52.405(c) provides that a utility must list in its tariff a number that will allow a customer to notify the utility of an emergency condition. Staff believes that these changes are reasonable because it complies with 3 AAC 52.405 and directs a customer to a more comprehensive list of contact information.

## Rule 6.8: Non-Sufficient Fund Balance Fee

On February 11, 1987, Chugach filed TA87-8, proposing to rewrite its tariff to comply with the newly adopted Service and Safety Standard Regulations for Regulated Electric Utilities, which went into effect January 1, 1987.<sup>6</sup> Chugach stated the revisions were written to comply with the service regulations, to produce a readable tariff, to reexamine the policies underlying the current tariff and to update and modify the schedules of miscellaneous charges and rates for raising and lowering facilities and special service installations. With TA87-8, Rule 6.8, Dishonored Checks was established with Tariff Sheet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See TA525-8, at page 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See TA433-8, at page 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See Letter Order No. L1700159, issued April 20, 2017.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See TA87-8, at page 1.

33, which established fees for dishonored checks.<sup>7</sup> Chugach filed TA180-8 on April 15, 1997, proposing to amend its tariff to increase its accountability to customers for services related to new construction and to implement a line extension credit specific to Small General Services customers.<sup>8</sup> With TA180-8, Chugach proposed to modify Rule 6.8 for clarification, changing the rule from "Dishonored Checks" to "Non-Sufficient Fund Balance Fee" and proposing \$15 for the fee amount. On June 19, 1997, the Commission approved Tariff Sheet No. 33, filed with TA180-8.<sup>9</sup>

With TA525-8, Chugach proposes to modify Tariff Sheet No. 33 to include that Member Service Representatives have authority to approve an acceptable payment medium. 10 Currently, the tariff language states that only the Manager of Credit and Collections can approve a payment medium after a member has been charged two consecutive nonsufficient fund balance charges. Chugach states that Member Services Representatives are trained and capable of making these types of determinations. Staff notes that 3 AAC 52.405(d) provides that a utility shall respond within 10 working days to complaints and if a customer is not satisfied with the response, the customer may file a complaint with the Commission. Staff believes that additional staff available to resolve member issues may provide quicker resolutions.

## Rule 6.9, Disconnection of Service, By Request

Currently, Chugach's Tariff Sheet No. 34 specifies that any requests for disconnection of service have to be made in person or in writing. With TA525-8, Chugach proposes to revise its tariff to allow other contact methods for members to request disconnection of service, to include by telephone. 11 Staff believes that this is reasonable because this provides a customer more flexibility to request disconnection of service.

## Rule 6.11, Annual Prepaid Bill

On August 11, 2010, Chugach filed TA320-8, proposing to add a paperless billing provision. In this filing, Chugach removed the \$25 credit for prepayment of annual bills from Rule 6.11, Annual Prepaid Bill, shown on Tariff Sheet No. 40. In addition, Chugach proposed adding a provision to Rule 6.11 that a member who prepays for service for a future twelve-month period will receive a credit to their bill. <sup>12</sup> On September 16, 2010, the Commission approved Tariff Sheet No. 40, filed with TA320-8. <sup>13</sup>

With TA525-8, Chugach proposes to add language to Rule 6.11 to clarify that members who elect to prepay their bill on an annual basis will continue to receive monthly billing statements, even though the account contains a credit balance. Staff notes that 3 AAC

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See TA87-8, at page 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See TA180-8, at page 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See Letter Order No. L9700519, issued June 19, 1997.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> See TA525-8, at page 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> See TA525-8, At page 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See TA320-8, at page 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> See Letter Order No. L1000507, issued September 16, 2010.

52.430(a) provides that a utility shall bill monthly for services rendered; therefore, Staff believes that the change is in line with 3 AAC 52.340 and is therefore reasonable.

# **Tariff Sheets**

With TA525-8, Chugach submitted Tariff Sheet Nos. 27, 31, 33, 34, and 40 to reflect proposed rule changes. Staff has reviewed the tariff sheets and believes that they are correct.

## Conclusion

Chugach requests approval to update the Billing and Collection language in Rule 6 of its operating tariff. Based on the discussion above, Staff recommends the Commission approve Tariff Sheet Nos. 27, 31, 33, 34, and 40 filed April 5, 2022, by Chugach with TA525-8. The effective date of the tariff sheets should be May 20, 2022.

Signature: What M Publish

Email: bob.pickett@alaska.gov

Signature: Keith Kurber II (May 19, 2022 08:03 AKDT)

Email: keith.kurber@alaska.gov

Signature:

Email: antony.scott@alaska.gov

Signature: Daniel Sullivan
Daniel Sullivan (May 19, 2022 10:54 AKDT)

Email: daniel.sullivan@alaska.gov

Signature: Janis W. Wilson (May 19, 2022 11:51 AKDT)

Email: janis.wilson@alaska.gov

RCA No.:	8	5 <sup>th</sup> Revision	Sheet No.	27
		Canceling		
		4th Revision	Sheet No.	27

RECEIVED OCT 2 3 2017

STATE OF ALASKA
REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA

Chugach Electric Association, Inc.

### 6. BILLING AND COLLECTIONS

#### 6.1 Payment of Bills

Bills for electric service are due and payable immediately on the billing date shown on the bill. The billing date will not vary from the postmark date by more than 3 days.

Payments for service may be made by cash, check, debit or credit card through a variety N of payment channels, including Chugach's website, Interactive Voice Response phone system, mail, or in-person at our office located at 5601 Electron Drive. Anchorage, Alaska 99518. Beginning March 1, 2018, Chugach will accept credit card payments without the customer paying a third party attendant transaction fee. A maximum of two credit card payments totaling no more than \$2,000 will be accepted within a 26 day period, per member account. A bill will be considered paid when the money is received N by Chugach.

A member's failure to receive bills or notices which have been properly addressed and placed in the United States mail or delivered electronically will not prevent the bills from becoming past due or delinquent or excuse the member's responsibility for payment.

No member who tenders a non-sufficient funds check or other dishonored method of payment will be relieved of the obligation to pay Chugach under the original terms of the bill or be entitled to defer Chugach's right to disconnect service for non-payment of bills.

#### (a) Past Due Bills

Bills which are not paid in full within 25 days of the billing date will be considered past due unless the member enters into a deferred payment agreement with Chugach, in accordance with Section 6.2 of this tariff, within the 25-day period. A late payment fee, as set forth in the applicable Schedule of Fees, will be charged for all bills that become past due. All past due amounts as well as the late charge will be included and separately indicated on the following month's bill.

Tariff Advice No.:	445-8	Effective:	December	22,	201

Issued by:

Chugach Electric Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 196300, Apchorage, Alaska 99519-6300

Ву

Thibart Ti

Title: Chief Executive Officer

RCA No.

CHUGACH POWERING ALASKA'S FUTURE 6<sup>th</sup> Revision Sheet No.

Canceling 5th Revision

Sheet No. 27

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Chugach Electric Association, Inc.



### 6. BILLING AND COLLECTIONS

### 6.1 Payment of Bills

Bills for electric service are due and payable immediately on the billing date shown on the bill. The billing date will not vary from the postmark date by more than three (3) days.

Payments for service may be made by cash, check, debit or credit card through a variety of payment channels, including Chugach's website, Interactive Voice Response phone system, mail, or in-person at our service center as indicated in Section 5.12 of this tariff. Beginning D, N March 1, 2018, Chugach will accept credit card payments without the customer paying a third-party attendant transaction fee. A maximum of two credit card payments totaling no more than \$2,000 will be accepted within a 26-day period, per member account. A bill will be considered paid when the money is received by Chugach.

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Tariff Advice No. 525-8 Issued by: Effective: May 19, 2022

Chugach Electric Association, Inc. P.O. Box 196300 Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6300

> Appendix 1 TA525-8 Page 1 of 5

RCA No.:	8	4 <sup>th</sup> Revision	Sheet No.	31
		Canceling		
		3 <sup>rd</sup> Revision	Sheet No.	31

APR 0 4 2017

STATE OF ALASKA REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA

## Chugach Electric Association, Inc. Level Pay Billing

### (a) Eligibility

The Level Pay Plan is a voluntary billing option available to residential and small general service members who receive service at a location where 12 D months of billing history is available, and whose account is not currently delinquent, unless the member has entered into a deferred payment agreement. Participants in the plan are subject to Chugach's rules and regulations expressed in this tariff. Members interested in signing up for the Level Pay Plan may contact Chugach's Member Services Department by sending a request to service@chugachelectric.com or by telephone at (907) 563-7366 or (800) 478-7494.

(b) Billing Amount

A member electing to participate in the Level Pay Plan will pay a monthly amount equal to the average of the total of the most recent 12 months' bills as of the date the Level Pay Plan billing amount is established. This monthly payment shall be made for 12 successive months. After 12 months a new Level Pay Plan billing amount will be calculated based on the average bill of the prior budget year less any over-recovery or plus any under-recovery from the prior year. Thus, any variance between actual and level pay bills is included in the calculation of the new level pay billing amount by spreading it over the 12 months in the new budget year. Upon request, at the time the new Level Pay Plan billing amount is established. Chugach will provide customers with a separate check representing any over-collected amounts.

#### (c) Adjustments to Billing Amount

The accounts of Level Pay Plan members will be reviewed periodically during the yearly billing cycle to compare actual bills with the budgeted amounts. If this review indicates a significant variation of actual billings versus anticipated, seasonally adjusted billings, Chugach will adjust the member's monthly level pay figure to bring the account into approximate balance by the last level pay bill in the cycle.

The monthly Level Pay Plan billing amount may be adjusted for changes in Chugach's base rates or fuel adjustment factors when such changes have, in the judgment of Chugach, a material impact on member bills.

Tariff Advice No.: 433-8	Effective:	April 24, 2017

Chugach Electric Association, Inc. Issued by:

P.O. Box 196300, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6300

Lee D. Thibert

Title: Chief Executive Officer

RCA No.

31 5th Revision Sheet No. Canceling

4th Revision 31 Sheet No.

BRIFF SECTION **RECEIVED** April 5, 2022 RCA

Chugach Electric Association, Inc.

### LEVEL PAY BILLING

#### Eligibility

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## **Billing Amount**

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The monthly Level Pay Plan billing amount may be adjusted for changes in Chugach's base rates or fuel adjustment factors when such changes have, in the judgment of Chugach, a material impact on member bills.

Tariff Advice No. 525-8 Effective: May 19, 2022 Issued by:

> Chugach Electric Association, Inc. P.O. Box 196300 Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6300

> > Appendix 1 TA525-8 Page 2 of 5

 RCA No.:
 8
 Fourth Revision
 Sheet No.
 33

 Canceling
 Third Revision
 Sheet No.
 33

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State of Alaska

Chugach Electric Association, Inc.

## (e) <u>Delinquency and Termination (Continued)</u>

Any member who terminates participation in the Level Pay Plan, but not service, will have any outstanding credit balance applied to their current bill. Any credit balance in excess of that credited to the next bill will be credited to future bills or refunded at the member's request.

An outstanding balance owed Chugach will be due on the member's current bill and subject to normal collection procedures.

### (f) Disputes

Members who dispute the correctness of a bill shall notify Chugach and state reasoning in support of their position. Such notice shall not be sufficient reason to withhold payment of the undisputed portion of the bill. If a bill is found to be Incorrect, Chugach will credit the amount of overpayment to the next bill rendered. Any amount due the member, in excess of that credited to the next bill, will be credited to future bills or will be refunded at the member's request.

### 6.8 Non-Sufficient Fund Balance Fee

Without waiving any rights under AS 09.65.115 to collect penalties, a non-sufficient fund balance fee as set forth in the applicable Schedule of Fees will be charged for dishonored checks, overdraft notices related to automated bank withdrawals, or non-sufficient fund balances associated with credit card charges. Any person who has been rendered two non-sufficient fund charges by Chugach within a twelve-month period may be denied the privilege of paying by that medium. Future payments will be required to be in cash or another medium of payment approved by the Manager of Credit and Collections.

Tariff Advice No.: 248-8

Effective: April 5, 2004

Issued by:

Chugach Electric Association, Inc. P.O. Box 196300, Aschorage, Alas

By: 4/1/1/1

Title: Chief Executive Officer

RCA No. 8

Canceling
4<sup>th</sup> Revision

Sheet No

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April 5,
2022

Chugach Electric Association, Inc.

5th Revision

#### (e) Delinquency and Termination (Continued)

Any member who terminates participation in the Level Pay Plan, but not service, will have any outstanding credit balance applied to their current bill. Any credit balance in excess of that credited to the next bill will be credited to future bills or refunded at the member's request.

An outstanding balance owed Chugach will be due on the member's current bill and subject to normal collection procedures.

#### (f) Disputes

Members who dispute the correctness of a bill shall notify Chugach and state reasoning in support of their position. Such notice shall not be sufficient reason to withhold payment of the undisputed portion of the bill. If a bill is found to be incorrect, Chugach will credit the amount of overpayment to the next bill rendered. Any amount due the member, in excess of that credited to the next bill, will be credited to future bills or will be refunded at the member's request.

### 6.8 Non-Sufficient Fund Balance Fee

Without waiving any rights under AS 09.65.115 to collect penalties, a non-sufficient fund balance fee as set forth in the applicable Schedule of Fees will be charged for dishonored checks, overdraft notices related to automated bank withdrawals, or non-sufficient fund balances associated with credit card charges. Any person who has been charged two consecutive non-sufficient fund balance fees within a twelve-month period may be denied the privilege of paying using the payment mediums to which the non-sufficient balance fund fees were applied. Future payments will be required to be in cash or another medium of payment approved by the Manager of Credit and Collections or a Member Services representative.

Tariff Advice No. 525-8

Issued by:

Chugach Electric Association, Inc. P.O. Box 196300 Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6300

> Appendix 1 TA525-8 Page 3 of 5

Effective: May 19, 2022

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Issued by:

Chugach Electric Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 196300, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6300

Title: General Manager

RCA No.

4th Revision

Sheet No.

Canceling

3rd Revision Sheet No.

ARIFF SECTION **RECEIVED** April 5, 2022

Chugach Electric Association, Inc.

## **Disconnection of Service**

## By Request

If a member contacts Chugach, in person, in writing, or by another contact method, to T request that service be disconnected, Chugach may hold that member responsible for all services, up to the later of the date of the disconnection, or three working days after the date of the member request.

## Without Notice

Chugach may disconnect a member's service without advance written notice under the following conditions:

- an immediate hazard exists which threatens the safety or health of the member, the general population or Chugach's personnel or facilities;
- 2. Chugach has evidence of meter tampering or fraud by the member; or,
- a member has failed to comply with the curtailment procedures imposed by Chugach during emergency supply shortages.

Tariff Advice No. 525-8

Issued by:

Chugach Electric Association, Inc. P.O. Box 196300 Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6300

> Appendix 1 TA525-8 Page 4 of 5

Effective: May 19, 2022

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Chugach Elec	tric Ass	ociation, Inc.			STATE OF ALAGKA REGULATORY COMMISSION OF	F ALAS	
6.11	-						
6.12	Electronic Bill Presentation (Paperless Billing)  A member may elect to receive the monthly electric bill for an account electronically and no longer receive paper bills for that account. Members that elect to participate in paperless billing for an account will receive a one-time credit to their bill for that account. The credit amount is identified on Chugach's Schedule of Fees and Credits (Tariff Sheet No. 75.1). The member may choose to discontinue paperless billing at any time. However, a member may not be provided more than one electronic billing credit for each account. Notices for termination of electric service for nonpayment will continue to be delivered by U.S. Mail.					N	
6.13	The gove to be ap vario const	amount of any tax or surcharge amount of any tax or surcharge amount of any tax or surchargemental authority on the Associate recovered through a tariff approportioned to the locality in whi us classes of service furnish itute an additional charge billicated and administered consistery.	ge imposed by Fecciation, or its revenue oved by the Regulation such tax or sureled therein. Such ed to members. Su	ue or income tory Commis harge is effect amounts to uch taxes or	tive, and among the be collected shall surcharges shall be d by the governing	L	
L – Previously 6.12							
Tariff Advice	Tariff Advice No.: 320-8 Effective: September 27, 2010						

Chugach Electric Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 196300, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6300

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Issued by:

RCA No. 8

 5th Revision
 Sheet No.
 40

 Canceling
 4th Revision
 Sheet No.
 40

RECEIVED
April 5,
2022

Chugach Electric Association, Inc.

### 6.11 Annual Prepaid Bill

A member who prepays electric service for a future twelve-month period will receive a credit to their bill. The credit amount is identified on Chugach's Schedule of Fees and Credits (Tariff Sheet No.75.1). The prepayment amount will be calculated by multiplying the average monthly bill at the location by twelve. The credit will be applied once payment is received. Any outstanding balance on the account must be paid prior to or with the prepayment. Service will continue to be delivered and paid for on an actual cost basis by monthly credits against the prepayment amount less the billing credit provided by Chugach. The actual period of prepayment will vary based on usage so that usage greater than projected will result in a shorter prepayment period while less usage than projected will result in a longer prepayment period. Members will continue to receive monthly billing statements, and if the prepayment credit is T reduced to zero, members will be responsible to remit payment for the amount due. If the T member terminates service from Chugach, the unused credit will be refunded.

### 6.12 Electronic Bill Presentation (Paperless Billing)

A member may elect to receive the monthly electric bill for an account electronically and no longer receive paper bills for that account. Members that elect to participate in paperless billing for an account will receive a one-time credit to their bill for that account. The credit amount is identified on Chugach's Schedule of Fees and Credits (Tariff Sheet No. 75.1). The member may choose to discontinue paperless billing at any time. However, a member may not be provided more than one electronic billing credit for each account. Notices for termination of electric service for nonpayment will continue to be delivered by U.S. Mail.

## 6.13 Adjustment for Tax or Surcharge

The amount of any tax or surcharge imposed by Federal, State, Municipal or other governmental authority on the Association, or its revenue or income, that is not required to be recovered through a tariff approved by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska shall be apportioned to the locality in which such tax or surcharge is effective, and among the various classes of service furnished therein. Such amounts to be collected shall constitute an additional charge billed to members. Such taxes or surcharges shall be collected and administered consistent with the manner prescribed by the governing agency.

Tariff Advice No. 525-8 Issued by: Effective: May 19, 2022

Chugach Electric Association, Inc. P.O. Box 196300 Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6300

> Appendix 1 TA525-8 Page 5 of 5